



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION ABOUT BREAST FEEDING AMONG LACTATING MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT:

Aim- To assess the knowledge and perception towards breastfeeding among lactating mothers who visited our “Well baby clinic at Department of Pediatrics and mothers who were admitted at Post natal care ward at Rajarajeshwari medical college and hospital”.

Design- exploratory and survey method

Samples- 500 mothers

Inclusion criteria- lactating mothers aged between 14 years to 35 years.

Exclusion criteria- Non-lactating mother

Method- Socio-demographic detail was collected. A consent form was signed by the mother. The Knowledge and perception about breastfeeding questionnaire was given to answer them. Mothers were debriefed about the importance of the questionnaire. Questionnaire's containing answers were gathered for analysis of data.

Results indicated that more than 90% of the mothers have knowledge and awareness about breastfeeding and its uses, they agree that breast milk is ideal milk and agrees with the importance of colostrum. The mothers agree that giving complementary food before six months was unsafe and at least 50 % mothers population expressed that they will start complementary food after 6 months. Nearly 50% of the mothers were aware and agree that proper positioning of breast is very important i.e. areola and nipple has to be placed into the baby's mouth.

50% of mothers are unaware of the fact that by exclusive breast feeding we can reduce the risk of breast cancer or ovarian cancer and helps to regain pre-pregnancy weight faster and lowers the rates obesity and 40.4% of the mothers are aware of the fact. More than 50 % of the population were unaware of fact that their exists effective attachment in exclusive breast feeding.

76% of the mothers agree that working women should chose such a working environment which encourages breastfeeding conditions in work area and should be provided onsite crèches.

More than 40 % of mothers claim they had received information about breastfeeding from Lactation consultant. More than 80% mothers had agreed that they received useful information.

KEYWORDS: Breastfeeding, Lactating mothers, Effective attachment, Exclusive breasting, Lactation Consultant, Tertiary care

INTRODUCTION:

As a parent, we want the best start for our newborn. Breast milk is the ideal and most natural food for our baby. Breast feeding is not just one way process, it's a mutual effort by mother to procure milk, and then feed the baby and on the other side baby through use of its rooting reflex, sucking reflexes and swallowing reflex Breast feeding means feeding an infant/young child with



the breast milk directly from female breasts by properly placing the breast into the infant's mouth.[1]

Exclusive breastfeeding is perfectly suited to meet our baby's growing needs during the first 6 months. Exclusive breast feeding means feeding only breast milk to baby and no complementary food or fluids, including water are not fed to the baby. However, for babies who are ill (e.g. fever, diarrhoea), a doctor should be consulted regarding the amount of water to be provided.[2] As mentioned above babies have something called rooting reflex and sucking reflex. Rooting reflex is present since birth assists in the act of breastfeeding. A newborn baby will turn his/her head toward anything that strokes his/her cheek or mouth, searching for the object by moving his/her head in steadily decreasing arcs until the object is found. Sucking reflex enables them to suck and swallow milk, instinctively start sucking anything that touches the top of their mouth. [3] When the baby's mouth fills with milk, the swallowing reflex is triggered. Observing how often the baby swallows during a feed is an important part of assessing how effectively she/he is feeding. The babies become used to responding in this way, (if breastfed, approximately for three weeks).

A successful breastfeed involves effective attachment and positioning. The breast is drawn into the baby's mouth and held there during feeding. Positioning will focus on how the mother can hold the baby in a position where it is easy for him/her to attach well to the breast.[4]

Effective attachment- The baby has scooped up a large mouthful of breast. His/her tongue cups the breast and mouth is full of breast tissue. This means that palate will be stimulated, so encouraging the sucking reflex he/she will be able to make the large jaw movements needed for feeding. There is no empty space inside the mouth, so suckling will be effective and also mother's nipple will not be damaged during suckling.[4]

If mother's nipple is not drawn to the back of his mouth as it is surrounded by space, the action of feeding is likely to cause it to rub or be pinched against the palate. This will make sore or abraded nipples more likely. The suction will feel stronger on the nipple because he has to suck hard to stay attached which means not effectively attached.

Women who breastfed are at lower risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, density Other potential protective effects of breastfeeding for the mother: rheumatoid arthritis maternal- type 2 diabetes ,postnatal depression.[5]

Babies who are breastfed are at lower risk of Pneumonia, diarrhea and other infectious disease, gain immunity to overcome them. Babies who are breastfed for six months to 2 years is very nutritious to baby's health. Also provides allot in intellectual growth. Babies will build an effective attachment through this type feeding.[5]

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory study was conducted the knowledge and perception about breast feeding among lactating mothers. The socio demographic details were collected of the mothers admitted at Postnatal ward and mothers attending the "Well baby clinic", Rajarajeshwari Medical College and Hospital. The main objective of the study was to assess the knowledge and perception towards breastfeeding among these lactating mothers by giving questionnaire.

Statistical analysis- Chi square was performed to analyze and assess the knowledge and perception about breastfeeding among lactating mothers the data appropriately.



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The study “Knowledge and Perception about Breast feeding among lactating mothers” was conducted on patients admitted at Post natal care ward, Rajarajeshwari medical college and hospital – Tertiary care hospital.

The study was conducted to understand the level of knowledge, awareness and perception of mothers about breast feeding.

House wives, Full time workers and Part time workers were part of the samples from different regions mainly from rural area and different religions. 500 Samples were gathered from post natal care ward of Rajarajeshwari medical college and hospital.

According to another study conducted by WHO [6]. A significant association was found between education with total knowledge score of breastfeeding and no significant association was found between total knowledge score of breastfeeding with remaining socio demographic variables like age, marital status, family income and expenditure. A minimum level (secondary) of education of mothers seems to be directly related to good knowledge about breastfeeding. A similar study showed that knowledge regarding breast milk is highly associated with mothers’ education.

The results of our studies show that maternal education has a very significant impact on overall knowledge about breast milk. Mothers with higher education were found to have more knowledge regarding breast milk, as compared to mothers with lower education and illiterate ones. A mother’s education seemed to be directly related to the life of a child. More educated mothers make better use of life, health services, provide better child care, and have knowledge about appropriate feeding of their child breastfeeding is poor among female garment workers.

The study indicates that 97% of mothers have awareness about the concept of breast feeding. 90% of the mothers have the knowledge about proper meaning of breast feeding. A similar finding was supported the results, it was conducted by Jones G et al [7]. The results illustrated that 75.8% had the knowledge on initiation of breastfeeding.

98% of mother’s have agreed that mother’s milk is Ideal milk to child and accepts with the fact of similar study by Jones G et al on [7].

In a study conducted by WHO South-East Asia Journal of Public Health Lucen Afrose et al on [8]. 80% mothers are aware about meaning of colostrums. A similar study was conducted at Bangladesh, study reveals that knowledge on initial and colostrum feeding (89% and 77% respectively) is very high. They also found that early initiation of breastfeeding was found to be low (43%). This may be due mainly to the existing traditional beliefs and practices in the rural community. It appears that the belief that breast milk “does not come down” before the third day is still prevalent.

80% of the mothers claim that when baby stops taking feed it is considered to be satisfied of the milk intake. 77.5 % of mothers had started complementary feeding after six months and 33% mothers had started early complementary feeding if doctors had recommended. A similar study was conducted by S.Rao et al on complementary feeding practices [9].

96% of mothers agree that giving extra food within the first six months is not safe to the baby.

46% of mothers population expressed that they will start complementary food after 6 months and other 50% of the mothers will start complementary feeding after 9 months. It shows a very healthy understanding about the ill effects of early starting of complementary feeding to baby.



Nearly 50% of the mothers are aware and agree that proper positioning of breast is very important i.e. areola and nipple has to be placed into the baby's mouth. There should be a skin to skin contact between mother and baby. The other population who disagree with statement, it could be due to illiteracy and lack of knowledge provided in this area. A similar study was conducted by Colson S D et al .[10]

59.6% of mothers are unaware of the fact that by exclusive breast feeding can reduce the risk of breast cancer or ovarian cancer and helps to regain pre-pregnancy weight faster and lowers the rates obesity and 40.4% of the mothers are aware of the fact.

84% of mothers accepted that they will not stop breastfeeding to their child even after starting complementary food which shows that 16 % will stop breast feeding when complementary food is given to them. A similar study done by Kalanda BF et al and study also proved the same[11].

67% to 80% of the mother's populations are unaware about the concept and meaning exclusive breastfeeding which was a important information for the mother's to understand and a brief understanding was given to mothers about it. The results were matching with study done by Arifeen et al who conducted a study on exclusive breastfeeding reduces acute respiratory infection and diarrhea deaths among infants in Dhaka slums[12].

63% of mother's were unaware of the fact that babies should be breast fed as quickly as possible after caesarian delivery.

77% of the population of mothers are unaware of the fact that their exists effective attachment in exclusive breast feeding. Klaus MH et al conducted, "Bonding: building the foundations of secure attachment and independence and accept the fact that their exists an effective attachment if the child is breastfeed exclusively"[13].

76% of the mothers agree that working women should chose such a working environment which encourages breastfeeding conditions in work area and should be provided onsite crèches. Ong G et al did study on "Impact of working status on breastfeeding in Singapore" evidence from the national breastfeeding survey 2001 and results showed that more than 50% of the mothers agree that working women chose an environment favoring breastfeeding conditions in work area. [14]

5% of mothers claim that they will breast feed their child for first 3 months where as the other 95% of mother's population agreed that they will breast feed their babies for 6 months to 2 years. 55% of mothers expressed that they breast feed their child only on demand feeding. More than 40 % of mothers claim they had received information about breastfeeding from Lactation specialist. More than 98% mothers had good information agreed the information provided was very useful for them and they agreed to abide by these rules.

CONCLUSION-

- More than 90 % of mothers have knowledge, awareness about breastfeeding and its uses and agree that breast milk is ideal milk and agrees the importance of colostrum.
- More than 90% of the mothers agree that giving complementary food before six months is unsafe and at least 46% of mothers population expressed that they will start complementary food after 6 months and other 50% of the mothers will start complementary feeding after 9 months.



- Nearly 50% of the mothers are aware and agree that proper positioning of breast is very important i.e. areola and nipple has to be placed into the baby's mouth.
- More than 50% of mothers are unaware of the fact that by exclusive breast feeding can reduce the risk of breast cancer or ovarian cancer and helps to regain pre-pregnancy weight faster and lowers the rates obesity and 40.4% of the mothers are aware of the fact.
- More than 60 % of the mother's populations are unaware about the concept and meaning exclusive breastfeeding.
- 63% of mother's were unaware of the fact that babies should be breast fed as quickly as possible after caesarian delivery.
- 77% of the population of mothers are unaware of the fact that their exists effective attachment in exclusive breast feeding
- 76% of the mothers agree that working women should chose such a working environment which encourages breastfeeding conditions in work area and should be provided onsite crèches.
- More than 40 % of mothers claim they had received information about breastfeeding from Lactation specialist. More than 98% mothers had good information agreed the information provided

ROLE OF LACTATION CONSULTANT IN IMPROVING BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES

- Every hospital should appoint an Lactation consultant
- A work of Lactation consultant is an allied health professional who specializes in the clinical management of breastfeeding practices. She should be aware of anatomy and physiology of breast, nutrition counseling and practices, infant and child growth and development, medical terminology, and sociology or cultural sensitivity
- Prior counseling to the mother on motherhood- anatomy and physiology of breast, process of lactation and breastfeeding importance, role and practices.
- Counseling the mothers as soon as possible after delivery to breastfeed the child
- Rigorous counseling to be provided for mothers regarding the "Importance of breastfeeding" – enquiring the mother if she is having any difficulty in feeding the child, if mother is unable to understand positioning while breastfeeding, hourly follow-ups to be maintained
- Help the mothers to understand the difference noticed between breastfed child and not breastfed child.
- Working mothers need to be educated about continuation of breast feeding, educate the mothers to request for breastfeeding practices at work places.
- Lactation specialist with help of social worker need to educate the importance and necessity of breastfeeding to the baby for the rural and urban areas through role play, street show and through other different Media



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